H Hurd (R.)

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A

LETTER

TO THE

LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER,

OCCASIONED BY

HIS STRICTURES

ON

ARCHBISHOP SECKER

AND

BISHOP LOWTH,

IN HIS

LIFE OF BISHOP WARBURTON

NOW PREFIXED TO THE QUARTO EDITION OF THAT PRELATE'S WORKS.

THE SECOND EDITION.

BY

A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

OXFORD:

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MDCCXCVI.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

MY LORD,

YOU have at length favoured the public with the long-expected Life of your friend Biſhop Warburton[a]; and had it been confined ſolely to the character of that great Prelate and his works, you would not have been troubled with any obſervations upon it from me. For although I am one of that very large number of readers, who think, that in your portrait of this author, we ſee the warm colouring of affection and admiration, rather than the ſober and faithful pencil of truth; yet I am far from being either ſurpriſed or offended at a circumſtance, which ſo frequently occurs in ſuch memoirs as yours. I know too much of human nature to expect that a friend ſo zealous, and ſo highly obliged, as your Lordſhip has been by Bi-

[a] Intitled, *A Diſcourſe by way of General Preface to the quarto Edition of Biſhop Warburton's Works*, &c.

This publication, being deſigned for the purchaſers only of that edition, did not fall into my hands till lately, otherwiſe it would probably have been noticed ſooner.

ſhop Warburton, ſhould be a perfectly cool and impartial Biographer, or be able to reſtrain the overflowings of his gratitude within their juſt bounds, within thoſe preciſe and narrow limits, to which the rigorous laws of hiſtory would confine them.

This I think is more than can be reaſonably demanded; and I therefore feel diſpoſed to make every poſſible allowance for the peculiar warmth of your Lordſhip's piety (if I may ſo call it) towards your benefactor; when you aſſure us, "that in "the whole compaſs of modern or ancient theo-"logy there is nothing equal or ſimilar to that ex-"traordinary performance, the Divine Legation [a]; "that the ninth book is the nobleſt effort that has "hitherto been made to give a Rationale of Chriſ-"tianity [b]; that Mr. Warburton's edition of Pope's "Works is the beſt that was ever given of any "claſſic [c]; that his *fine* edition of Shakeſpeare "muſt ever be highly valued by men of ſenſe "and taſte [d]; that they who have a taſte for the "*gentler* polemics will read with pleaſure his ſoft "and elegant anſwer to Dr. Webſter [e]; that whe-"ther we conſider him as a writer or a divine, it is "not eaſy to find terms that will do juſtice to his "merit [f]; and in fine that ſuch a man as Dr. War-"burton is leſſened by elevation, and is in him-"ſelf too great to be advanced [g]." Theſe encomiums, my Lord, have, I am afraid, excited in

[a] Diſcourſe &c. p. 36. [b] Ib. p. 105. [c] Ib. p. 60.
[d] Ib. p. 55. [e] Ib. p. 21. [f] Ib. p. 115. [g] Ib. p. 85.

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the minds of by far the greateſt number of your readers, emotions very different from thoſe which they were certainly meant to produce. But to me, who am a ſincere, though not extravagant admirer both of Biſhop Warburton and your Lordſhip, they appear as nothing more than the natural effuſions of a feeling and a grateful heart; and conſidering how much reaſon you have for venerating the memory of Dr. Warburton, I honour you for the generous enthuſiaſm of your ſentiments and expreſſions towards him, and applaud, rather than condemn, the extraordinary ardour of your paſſion for ſuch a friend.

Thus far then I am not unwilling to go along with you. But why, my Lord, did you not ſtop here? Why did you permit your zeal to carry you beyond the bounds of equity and candour? Why did you think it neceſſary for the purpoſe of exalting your favourite character, to depreciate thoſe of others, who have hitherto ſtood deſervedly very high in the eſtimation of the public? This, my Lord, is ſurely carrying the privilege of a Biographer a little too far. It is claiming more indulgence to the feelings of gratitude than any one has a right to expect; and it is at the ſame time paying but an ill compliment to your friend, to let the world underſtand, that the only way to make his ſcale preponderate is, to lighten that which you conceive to be the oppoſite one.

Your Lordſhip will readily perceive, that I here allude to the characters you have very needleſsly

drawn of Archbiſhop Secker and Biſhop Lowth, and the eſtimate you have been pleaſed to preſent to us of their reſpective talents, learning, and writings.

It is greatly to be lamented (and for your own ſake I lament it very ſincerely) that you ſhould have gone ſo much out of your way, to animadvert on the literary merits of theſe two great and good men. It is a melancholy proof, that too much of that unhappy ſpirit and temper, which every friend of genius and of learning contemplates with grief in the writings of Biſhop Warburton, does ſtill exiſt among ſome of his Diſciples; that no length of time can intirely ſubdue and extinguiſh it; that the pureſt and moſt virtuous minds cannot altogether eſcape its influence; and that ſome ſmall portion of it has found means to inſinuate itſelf, even into the venerable manſion of Hartlebury Caſtle. It is, in fact, but too evident that (beſides the motive above mentioned) one principal reaſon for introducing ſo invidiouſly the names of Secker and Lowth into the hiſtory of Warburton was, becauſe they had been guilty of differing ſomewhat in opinion from the author of the Divine Legation: a crime, which He and your Lordſhip have uniformly conſidered as unpardonable and inexpiable, and worthy of being purſued with the keeneſt reſentment.

But ſtrange as it may appear to you, my Lord, there are in this kingdom great numbers of learned and eminent men, who do not eſteem this to be an offence of quite ſo much magnitude, as it ſeems to be

be in your Lordſhip's eyes. And there are more particularly ſeveral perſons of this place ſtill living, who remember the talents and the virtues of Secker and of Lowth, who were honoured with their friendſhip, who reverence their memory, who rank them amongſt the brighteſt ornaments of this Univerſity, and who cannot ſee the ſlighteſt injury offered to their fame with unconcern and indifference. As one of that number therefore I muſt beg permiſſion, with all that reſpect which is juſtly due to your character and your ſituation, to expoſtulate with you a little on your treatment of thoſe excellent men, ſo unmerited by them, and ſo unworthy, in my judgement, of yourſelf.

On the ſubject of Biſhop Lowth I ſhall ſay but little, becauſe I have ſome reaſon to ſuſpect, that his defence will be undertaken by a much abler pen. But thus much I will take upon me to affirm generally, that in the following paſſage you have by no means done juſtice to his learning and his talents. "His reputation as a writer (you ſay) was raiſed "chiefly on his Hebrew literature as diſplayed in "thoſe two works, his Latin Lectures on Hebrew "Poetry and his Engliſh Verſion of the Prophet "Iſaiah. The former is well and elegantly com-"poſed, but in a vein of criticiſm not above the "common; the latter, I think, is chiefly valua-"ble, as it ſhews how little is to be expected from "Dr. Kennicott's work, and from a new Tranſla-"tion of the Bible for public uſe[a]."

[a] Diſcourſe, &c. p. 94.

This, my Lord, I can venture to aſſert is not the opinion which the Public at large, and the beſt critics in this and other countries, have formed of the two works above mentioned; and I do not think that your ſingle authority, unſupported by any proofs, will be ſufficient to outweigh the general ſuffrage of the learned world.

In the Prelections on the Hebrew Poetry there is not, I acknowledge, that extreme metaphyſical ſubtlety and refinement, that wonderful ingenuity in diſcovering connexions and extorting meanings perfectly unknown to the author, and imperceptible to every human eye, which ſo eminently diſtinguiſh the Commentary on Mr. Pope's Eſſay on Man, the Diſſertation on the ſixth book of the Æneid, and the Notes on Shakeſpeare, by your favourite author. Theſe are, I frankly own, works of criticiſm *above the common*, and to their tranſcendent merit the Prelections on the Hebrew Poetry do not pretend. But as far as a correct taſte, a ſound judgement, a nice diſcernment, a ſpirit of critical diſcrimination, a rich fund of erudition, a perfect knowledge of his ſubject, and a complete acquaintance with the language, the manners, the cuſtoms, the idioms, the ſentiments, and the ideas of the Authors he criticiſes—as far as theſe qualifications can go in conſtituting a good critic, that critic Dr. Lowth is, and has clearly ſhewn himſelf to be in the work under conſideration. He may alſo juſtly claim the merit of novelty. For he is the firſt author (in this country at leaſt) who has treated ſo copiouſly and ſo accurately the peculiar nature,

genius,

genius, and character of the Hebrew poetry, and conſidered ſo minutely all its various forms and component parts. And he has executed this taſk in a manner ſo maſterly, in a diction ſo beautiful, elegant, and ſublime, ſo enriched with every grace and ornament of ſtyle, that the excellence of the compoſition appears to keep pace with the dignity of the ſubject, and has, I believe, diffuſed through the world a much juſter and higher idea of the ſacred poetry of the Scriptures, than was ever entertained of it before.

Theſe Lectures, when firſt given in the Univerſity, were received by a moſt learned and critical audience, with the warmeſt approbation and applauſe. They have ſince been read with equal delight by almoſt every man of taſte and learning both at home and abroad; have been commented upon and highly commended by ſome of the firſt ſcholars of Europe[a]; and will, I am perſuaded, continue to hold in future ages, as they have now long held in this, a very high rank among the pureſt and moſt claſſical productions of this country.

His other great work, the Tranſlation of Iſaiah, does not ſurely merit the marked contempt you have been pleaſed to throw upon it, by ſaying that "it is *chiefly valuable*, as it ſhews how little is to be "expected from Dr. Kennicott's work and from a "new Tranſlation of the Bible for public uſe." Is this, my Lord, do you ſeriouſly think, the whole effect

[a] Michaelis, &c.

of

of this great man's labours for a long courſe of years on the ſublimeſt of the prophets? There are, I believe, very few ſcholars or divines in this or any other country, who will concur with you in this opinion. Should we admit that our old Tranſlation of Iſaiah may be better adapted to public uſe; yet it ſhould be remembered that it was not altogether for the people in general that Biſhop Lowth's Tranſlation was intended. It was for men that were able to form ſome judgement of the mind and manner of the Author, of the general nature and of the peculiar ſtructure of his compoſition [a], for men of thought and reflection, of letters and education: and in this view it ſtands deſervedly high in the eſtimation of the learned world. The Tranſlation is throughout more accurate and nearer to the original, than the authorized one; in many places it is more dignified and ſublime, and retains more of the Author's air and ſpirit; it has corrected ſeveral paſſages, where the ſenſe has been evidently miſtaken; it has reſtored order and method where there was ſcarce any thing but perplexity and confuſion before; it has given a clear and natural ſenſe to phraſes that were in the old Tranſlation perfectly unintelligible; and the Notes annexed to it are a moſt valuable acceſſion to Hebrew criticiſm. Theſe aſſertions I could eaſily ſupport by innumerable proofs, but contenting my-

[a] See his Preliminary Diſſertation.

ſelf

ſelf with producing a very few in a ſhort note[a], I haſten to your remarks on Archbiſhop Secker.

[a] Thus at ch. i. 12, 13.

When ye come to appear before me,
Who hath required this at your hands?
Tread my courts no more; bring no more a vain oblation;
Incenſe! It is an abomination unto me.
The new moon, and the ſabbath, and the aſſembly proclaimed,
I cannot endure, the faſt, and the day of reſtraint.

The reader is deſired to refer to the Biſhop's notes upon this paſſage, and to compare it with our preſent Verſion: and to do the ſame with reſpect to the following paſſage at ver. 25.

And I will purge in the furnace thy droſs,
And I will remove all thine alloy.

So again, at ch. v. 1. ix. 8. lv. 9. &c. &c. Let him alſo obſerve the wonderful ſublimity that is pointed out in the 14th ver. of ch. v. where Hades is repreſented as "introduced in perſon, and "placed before our eyes as a ravenous monſter, opening wide "his unmeaſurable jaws, and ſwallowing all together." Let him further take notice of the ſtriking manner in which the beautiful elegance and exquiſite imagery of the peaceful times of the Meſſiah, at ch. xi. are contraſted with thoſe paſſages in the ancient poets which deſcribe the renewal of the golden age. But more eſpecially I would refer him to that moſt ingenious elucidation of the Prophecy contained in the 13th and 14th chapters, together with the Ode that follows it. Of which the Biſhop juſtly obſerves, "that there is no poem of its kind in any "language, in which the ſubject is ſo well laid out, and ſo happily conducted with ſuch a richneſs of invention, with ſuch "variety of images, perſons, and diſtinct actions, with ſuch rapidity and eaſe of tranſition, in ſo ſmall a compaſs. For "beauty of diſpoſition, ſtrength of colouring, greatneſs of ſentiment, brevity, perſpicuity, and force of expreſſion, it ſtands "among all the monuments of antiquity unrivalled." This is certainly far *above the common*, and may be deemed a maſterpiece of criticiſm.

"Dr.

" Dr. Secker, you obſerve, was a wiſe man, an " edifying preacher, and an exemplary biſhop. " But the courſe of his life and ſtudies had not " qualified him to decide on ſuch a work as that " of the Divine Legation. Even in the *narrow* " walk of literature he moſt affected, that of cri- " ticiſing the Hebrew text, it does not appear that " he attained to any great diſtinction. His chief " merit (and ſurely it was a very great one) lay in " explaining clearly and popularly in his ſermons, " the principles delivered by his friend Biſhop " Butler in his famous book of *The Analogy*, " and in ſhewing the important uſe of them to " Religion[a]."

This is the opinion you have formed and publiſhed to the world of the abilities and the learning of Archbiſhop Secker, on which I muſt beg leave to make a few obſervations.

That he was a wiſe man, an edifying preacher, and an exemplary biſhop, no one ever doubted. But what could tempt you, my Lord, to add the degrading remarks that follow?

They evidently reſolve themſelves into theſe three diſtinct allegations.

I. That the courſe of the Archbiſhop's life and ſtudies did not qualify him to decide on ſuch a work, as that of the Divine Legation.

II. That even in the *narrow* walk of literature, which he moſt affected, that of criticiſing the He-

[a] Diſcourſe, &c. p. 82.

brew

brew text, it does not appear that he attained to any great diſtinction.

III. That his chief merit lay in explaining clearly and popularly in his ſermons, the principles delivered by his friend Biſhop Butler in his famous book of *The Analogy*.

In reply to theſe aſſertions allow me in the firſt place to aſk your Lordſhip, what ground you have for affirming, that the courſe of Dr. Secker's life and ſtudies did not qualify him to decide on *ſuch* a work as the Divine Legation? What is there in this aſtoniſhing book, which ſhould render it impoſſible for *ſuch* a man as Archbiſhop Secker to decide upon it? One would really almoſt imagine, from the terms in which you ſpeak of it, and the reverential awe with which you ſeem to contemplate it, that it was a work compoſed by ſome ſuperior being, far beyond the comprehenſion even of the moſt learned of the human race; not to be touched by profane and unhallowed hands, nor to be approached by any but the INITIATED, the choſen few, who had the good fortune to be inſtructed in the awful myſteries of thoſe ſacred volumes. If this be the caſe, if the beſt ſcholars in this kingdom are utterly incapable, not only of *compoſing* ſuch a work as the Divine Legation, but even of forming a juſt opinion of its real merits, your Lordſhip is then perfectly right in aſſerting, as you have done, "That in the whole compaſs of modern and an-"cient theology, there is nothing *equal* or *ſimilar* "to this moſt *extraordinary* performance."

To

To be ſerious, my Lord, I am perfectly willing to allow the Divine Legation its full ſhare of admiration and applauſe. It is a work, which does honour to its author, and credit to this country. The argument is ingenious and new, and muſt be allowed, even by thoſe who doubt a little whether the concluſion amount to abſolute demonſtration, to be a very commodious and amuſing vehicle for a variety of uſeful as well as of recondite learning, for many maſterly obſervations, many curious philological diſquiſitions, many excellent criticiſms on Scripture, many leading principles to guide us through the intricacies of theology. And the whole work is evidently the production of a vigorous intellect, a powerful and capacious mind, a lively imagination, and a very original turn of thinking. All this I readily allow; I allow that few men but Warburton could have written ſuch a book. But I contend at the ſame time, that every man of a cultivated mind and a learned education, who is poſſeſſed of judgement, ſenſe, and taſte, is perfectly qualified to judge of the Divine Legation. That there are, and have been, great numbers in this kingdom ſo qualified cannot be doubted, and that Archbiſhop Secker was one of this number, it is impoſſible for any man who had a perſonal acquaintance with him, or has ever read his works with attention, to deny. I had myſelf the honour of knowing him well, while he preſided over the Dioceſe of Oxford, and afterwards, and can truly ſay, that I have met with few men, of a ſtronger

ſtronger underſtanding, a ſounder judgement, a more correct taſte, or more various and profound erudition. If this fact wanted any confirmation, it may be derived from the beſt authority, from his very ingenious and judicious Biographer [a], who lived under his roof, and in habits of intimacy and confidence with him for ſeveral years after he was advanced to the ſee of Canterbury, and muſt therefore be a competent judge of the extent of his abilities and his attainments.

From his account we learn, "that the Archbiſhop's intellectual abilities were of a much higher claſs than they, who had never any opportunities of converſing intimately with him, and who form their opinion of his talents from the general plainneſs of his language only, will perhaps be willing to allow. He had a quick apprehenſion, a clear diſcernment, a ſound judgement, a retentive memory. He poſſeſſed that native good ſenſe, which is the grand maſter-key to every art and ſcience, and makes a man ſkilful in things he has never learnt, as ſoon as ever it becomes uſeful or neceſſary for him to know them. He compoſed with great eaſe and readineſs; and in the early part of

[a] Dr. Beilby Porteus, the preſent Lord Biſhop of London, Author of *the Review of the Archbiſhop's Life and Character*, prefixed to the firſt volume of his Sermons; a Prelate too well known to need any encomiums of mine, and whoſe high and deſerved reputation muſt place his fidelity and accuracy above all ſuſpicion.

his

his life the letters which he wrote to ſome of his moſt intimate friends were full of imagination, vivacity, and elegance. But when he became a pariſh-prieſt, he found the graces of ſtyle inconſiſtent with the purpoſes of paſtoral inſtruction, and willingly ſacrificed the reputation he might eaſily have acquired as a fine writer, to the leſs ſhowy qualifications of a uſeful one.

" His learning was very extenſive, and on thoſe points, which he ſtudied with any degree of attention, profound. He was well acquainted with the Greek and Latin languages; had in the younger part of his life read with taſte the beſt authors in each; and of the latter more eſpecially had imbibed ſo ſtrong a tincture, that when he was near ſeventy, after a diſuſe of above forty years, he compoſed the Latin ſpeech printed at the end of his Charges; the ſtyle of which is nervous, manly, and correct.

" He poſſeſſed a large ſhare of critical penetration, and ſcarce ever read any book of note without making remarks upon it. Some of theſe ſtill remain amongſt his manuſcripts. Some he communicated at different times to the editors or tranſlators of ſeveral claſſic authors. But his chief labours of this kind were beſtowed on the holy Scriptures, for which he came well prepared by his knowledge of the original languages in which they were written.

" He had ſtudied carefully ſome of the beſt Chriſtian

tian writers of the primitive ages, and without relying implicitly on their judgement, or adopting their errors, knew well how to avail himſelf of their real excellencies. Of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory he was a great maſter; had a clear idea of the progreſs of Chriſtianity from its firſt promulgation to the preſent times, of the various revolutions it had paſſed through, the different grounds on which it had been oppoſed or vindicated, the ſteps by which the corruptions of it had been gradually introduced, the arts by which they had been ſo long maintained, and the providential coincidence of events which afterwards contributed to remove them. He was well acquainted with the various ſects, into which the Church was anciently, and is at preſent, divided; he underſtood the nature and tendency of their reſpective tenets, the ſtate of the controverſies ſubſiſting among them, the reſpective merits of their beſt writers, the proper conduct to be obſerved towards each, and the good uſes that might be made of all. And though in his writings he never made a needleſs oſtentation of all this learning, yet they who examine ſome of the plaineſt of them cloſely and critically, will find them to be the reſult of deep thought and comprehenſive knowledge; will find that he expreſſes himſelf on almoſt every point with propriety, preciſion, and certainty; without any thing crude or injudicious, without any of thoſe raſh aſſertions and haſty concluſions, into which they, who have but a ſuper-

ficial view of things, and know not what ground they ſtand upon, are perpetually falling [a]."

So far the well informed and able writer of Dr. Secker's Life. But not to reſt the matter on the ſole authority of his Lordſhip, who was ſo cloſely connected with the Archbiſhop, I ſhall add the ſentiments of another eminent prelate, Dr. Markham, the preſent learned Archbiſhop of York; who, though well acquainted with Dr. Secker, had no particular attachment to him, or any peculiar prejudice in his favour; and who, from his diſtinguiſhed ſuperiority as a ſcholar, muſt be allowed to be a very ſufficient judge of the Archbiſhop's literary attainments. His words are (ſpeaking of that prelate) Ille primum habuit in multiplicibus quibus diſtrictus eſt curis nulli deeſſe; neque quiſquam fuit qui *literarum ſtudiis* majorem operam otioſus poſuit, quam ille occupatiſſimo in loco. In aliis quidem hominibus ingenium excellens et multiplicem ſcientiam agnoſcimus, in aliis conſilium, auctoritatem, probitatem, conſtantiam; in quo autem *hæc omnia ita abunde convenerint*, haud facile inveniemus [b].

After theſe deciſive teſtimonies in favour of his Grace's abilities, erudition, and critical penetration, your Lordſhip will hardly, I conceive, perſiſt in telling the world, that he was not qualified to decide on ſuch a work as the Divine Legation. But

[a] Life of Archbiſhop Secker, p. 77—84.

[b] Concio ad Clerum. 1769.

if in oppoſition to all this evidence you ſtill continue to maintain that ſingular opinion, his friends have a right to call upon you for the proof of it. If any ſuch proof exiſt, it is probably in your power to produce it. Your Lordſhip, or ſome other of Biſhop Warburton's friends, may poſſibly be in poſſeſſion of the very papers, which that Prelate ſays, Archbiſhop Secker gave him, containing his remarks on the Divine Legation. If this be ſo, let thoſe papers be given to the public. The world will then be able to decide whether the Archbiſhop was or was not competent to criticiſe that work. By that teſt, for my part, I am willing to abide. Till this is done, moſt men will, I conceive, be apt to ſuſpect that Dr. Secker has ſhewn himſelf but too able a judge of the Divine Legation; that he has ſtated objections to it, which Dr. Warburton found himſelf unable to anſwer; and that your Lordſhip therefore has thought it prudent to let thoſe papers remain unpubliſhed; judging it ſufficient to ſay, that Dr. Secker knew nothing at all of the ſubject in queſtion; which, it muſt be confeſſed, is a very eaſy and compendious method of getting rid of a formidable opponent.

II. Your next ſtricture on Archbiſhop Secker is, that even in the *narrow* walk of literature which he moſt affected, that of criticiſing the Hebrew text, it does not appear that he attained to any great diſtinction.

It is a remarkable circumſtance that not only Dr. Warburton, and his learned Biographer, but

many of thoſe who have on various occaſions ſtood forth publicly in his defence, have thought fit to expreſs a great contempt of Hebrew literature, and that, it is preſumed, for a very natural reaſon, becauſe they themſelves ſeem very little, if at all, acquainted with it. It may therefore be prudent enough with reſpect to themſelves and their own reputation as ſcholars; But is it equally ſo in regard to the intereſts of religion, and the credit of the ſacred writings, to decry a ſpecies of learning of the utmoſt importance to both? Does it become a great Prelate and a learned Divine like your Lordſhip, to depreciate the knowledge of a language the moſt ancient probably in the world, and in which the greateſt part of the Holy Scriptures is written; that part which contains the hiſtory of the creation, of the fall of man, of the promiſed Deliverer, of the nation and family from which he was to deſcend; which contains the whole ſeries of prophecies relating to him, together with many excellent books of ſage inſtruction and ſound morality, many admirable examples of patience and reſignation, many noble ſtrains of the ſublimeſt poetry, animated by a ſpirit of the moſt exalted piety? Is it not worth while to ſtudy a language, which unlocks all theſe ſtores of ſacred literature, all this important information, all theſe eſſential evidences of our faith? Ought not a Chriſtian Divine to have an accurate knowledge of all theſe high concerns; and can that knowledge be well acquired without a critical ſkill in the original language

guage itſelf[a]? Is it then wiſe, is it decorous in your Lordſhip, to tell the young eccleſiaſtics in our two Univerſities, that this ſort of erudition is a *narrow* walk of literature, and of courſe ſcarce worthy the ambition of a Student in Theology? If theſe ſentiments had prevailed a century ago, the world would never have ſeen thoſe ſtupendous and important works, the Polyglott of Walton, the ſplendid Edition of the Hebrew Bible by Houbigant, and the no leſs valuable one by Kennicott. Had your Lordſhip reflected for a moment on the probable effects of ſuch a ſtigma as you have caſt on Hebrew learning, you would not, I think, have treated with ſo much ſcorn this uſeful branch of theological knowledge; which, on the contrary,

[a] It may be pretended, perhaps, that ſo excellent a tranſlation as the Septuagint, ſuperſedes the neceſſity of ſtudying the original Hebrew. But beſides that this tranſlation is manifeſtly very unequal, and oftentimes plainly erroneous; as well might it be aſſerted, that the Vulgate Latin, or our Engliſh tranſlation of the New Teſtament, renders it needleſs to acquire a knowledge of the original Greek. "Thoſe," as Luther obſerves, "who "read only Verſions of the Hebrew Scriptures, ſee with the eyes "of others; they ſtand with the people in the Courts, and "view the ſacred rites at a diſtance; but whoever is acquainted "with the original text itſelf, is admitted with the Prieſts into "the Sanctuary, and is himſelf a witneſs and judge of all that "is tranſacted in the receſſes of the Temple. Hence," ſays this learned Reformer, "though my knowledge of the Hebrew "tongue is ſmall, I would not barter it for all the treaſures of "the whole world." Archbiſhop Newcome's Pref. to Ezekiel, p. lxii.

ſtands in need of every poſſible countenance and encouragement.

But as you have unfortunately thought fit to throw out this haſty and ill-judged cenſure on Hebrew learning, I think it indiſpenſably neceſſary to obviate, as far as I am able, the very miſchievous conſequences of it, by undertaking to prove, that a critical knowledge of the Hebrew language, and a ſkilful application of it to the illuſtration of the ſacred text, is ſo far from meriting the reproachful appellation of a *narrow* walk of literature, that, on the contrary, it requires as much induſtry, as large a fund of erudition, as vigorous an underſtanding, and as penetrating a genius, as perhaps any other branch of learning whatſoever.

To ſay nothing here of the rudiments of the Hebrew tongue, the various diſtinctions of its letters, and the complicated nature of the Maſoretic punctuation, I ſhall advert to the conſtruction of the language, its various idioms and peculiar modes of expreſſion, to the different ſtyle and manner of the different writers in it, to the affinity it bears to the other languages or dialects of the Eaſt, and the aſſiſtance it receives from them; eſpecially to its familiar contexture and cloſe combination either with the ancient Samaritan or the later Chaldee, if it be not altogether embodied with the former. I would alſo inſtance the ſhort and ſententious ſtyle of the poets, and what that great Hebrew Scholar, whom you ſo lightly eſteem, calls *their paralleliſm*, the peculiar form of their ſentences, and ſtructure

of

of the members of them, their correſpondence, oppoſition, or compariſon, by which the ſenſe of connected lines or verſes is ſo ſtrongly aſcertained and ſo finely illuſtrated, with other diſtinctions of this ſort, which he has moſt ingeniouſly remarked[a]. I would further notice the ſtriking inſtances of the moſt natural and genuine eloquence, of the pathetic and the ſublime, that are diſcernible in the hiſtorical and proſaic, as well as in the poetical, parts of ſeveral books of the Old Teſtament; together with the ſtrong colouring, glowing imagery, and majeſtic grandeur of the latter. Let me finally add the changes which this language muſt have undergone from the intercourſe of the Jews of different periods with other nations, eſpecially during the long term of the Babyloniſh captivity: And when all this is conſidered, it will appear, that it muſt be a work of conſiderable exertion and ability to gain a competent knowledge of the Hebrew language, ſo as to be able to criticiſe it with any tolerable degree of ſkill and judgement, or with any preciſe diſcernment of its peculiar properties and anomalies, its coincidences and variations.

But beſides the knowledge of the language, he that would properly criticiſe the Hebrew text, muſt compare it with the ancient verſions, the various interpretations, comments, and expoſitions of learned men, both Jews and Chriſtians. He muſt more particularly make himſelf intimately acquainted

[a] See Preliminary Diſſertation to Iſaiah.

with the Greek verſion of the Septuagint, ſtudy its hiſtory and the various copies of it, the different times in which it was written, as well as the occaſion, the manner, and the ſtyle of its ſeveral parts. And in order to aſcertain the ſenſe of this verſion, other verſions muſt alſo be conſulted, which probably ſprung from this, ſuch as the Coptic and the Arabic. To theſe muſt be added the Syriac, the Vulgate, and the Samaritan verſion of the Pentateuch (which the Hebrew critic will find highly uſeful to him), together with the Greek verſions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, which Origen has collected and arranged in his Hexapla with the Septuagint.

Nor is it from theſe verſions only that he muſt look for aſſiſtance; he muſt ſeek it alſo from the tranſlations and interpretations of the ancient inhabitants of Judea. The hiſtory and authority of the Targums muſt be called in to his aid, and eſpecially thoſe two principal ones, of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel; the former of whom tranſlated the Pentateuch, and the other the later prophets into the Hebrew-Chaldee language [a].

[a] There are alſo Targums of ſome other books of the Old Teſtament, or of the Hagiographa, attributed to the ſame Jonathan; and the Jeruſalem Targum, as well as thoſe uſually aſcribed to R. Joſeph, will all merit ſome notice from the intelligent Hebrean. What authority is due to ſome of theſe Targums may be diſcovered from the attention which was continually paid to them by the Jews, eſpecially to the moſt ancient of them, which were read every day in their ſynagogues. And ſome great critics will have it, that our Saviour himſelf highly honoured

Some verſions alſo of more modern date, ſuch as thoſe of Pagninus, of Munſter, of Arias Montanus, Caſtalio, and others in the vernacular language of ſeveral countries before the Reformation, as well as of the reformed Churches themſelves; together with the comments of the primitive Fathers of the Chriſtian Church, and the volumes of criticiſm collected from various authors in our own and other countries, will claim a conſiderable ſhare of attention from the learned Hebrean. And to all this muſt be added that other valuable ſource of information, which has been lately opened to the Hebrew ſcholar by the laborious and unwearied induſtry of the celebrated Dr. Kennicott; who undertook the arduous taſk of comparing and collating near ſeven hundred manuſcripts, collected from various parts of Europe (ſome of which were near eight hundred years old); and, after the moſt aſtoniſhing exertions by himſelf and his aſſiſtants for near twenty years, at length brought the work to a happy concluſion, and, as was hinted above, publiſhed a noble and ſplendid Edition of the Hebrew Bible in two folio volumes, with all the va-

honoured the Targum in quoting from it, rather than from the Hebrew text, in thoſe words at the beginning of the twenty-ſecond Pſalm, whilſt He was expiring on the croſs: for, inſtead of the Hebrew עזבתני he uſes the Chaldee שבקתני, *Thou haſt forſaken me.*

There are indeed many abſurd conceits of the Jews reſpecting theſe Targums: but the judicious and diſcerning critic will eaſily ſeparate the gold from the droſs.

rious

rious readings commodiouſly diſpoſed under the original text; a work which Biſhop Lowth moſt juſtly appreciated at a very high rate[a]. It is, without queſtion, a publication of very conſiderable importance and utility, which does the higheſt honour to this country, and to the learning, ability, and induſtry of the author. And to every one that would ſtudy the original text of the Old Teſtament with care and accuracy, it will, I can venture to aſſert, convey much uſeful light and moſt valuable information.

Nor is even this the whole extent of the learning that will be required from the judicious Hebrew critic. A book that takes in ſo large a compaſs of knowledge, as the ſacred Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, can never be examined properly but by a mind richly ſtored with ſcience. The knowledge of hiſtory and chronology, of legiſlation, moral and civil polity, of the various nations

[a] It is alſo ſpoken of by the preſent very learned Primate of Ireland in the following terms: "The collation of Hebrew "MSS. by the late learned and indefatigable Dr. Kennicott, a "fit inſtrument in the hand of Providence for planning and "executing this great work, forms an invaluable acceſſion to "our external helps." Pref. to Min. Proph. p. ix.

The Reader may likewiſe find another ſtrong teſtimony in favour of Dr. Kennicott, in the Corrections of various paſſages of the Engliſh Verſion of the Old Teſtament, by the late Dr. Roberts, Provoſt of Eton College, p. 3. The Provoſt, I am well aſſured, was an excellent Hebrew ſcholar, had ſtudied Dr. Kennicott's work with cloſe attention for ſeveral years, and was very competent to decide on it's merits.

and

and tribes with which the earth is overſpread, of the manners, cuſtoms, and antiquities of the Eaſt; the knowledge too of nature as well as of books, of the various parts of the vegetable and animal creation, more eſpecially of man, his nature and properties, the deſign and end of his being, the conſequences of his dependent ſtate, and the duties of his ſituation; theſe and many other branches of learning equally important muſt enrich the mind of the true Biblical critic, and did actually diſtinguiſh in a very eminent degree the character of that great Prelate, whom I am now attempting to vindicate.

By this time I hope it appears that the province of the truly learned Hebrean is not quite ſo *narrow* a walk of literature, as your Lordſhip chooſes to repreſent it; but that it requires a very large ſhare of labour and ability, and an extenſive acquaintance with almoſt every kind of learning, beſides that lower ſpecies of it, mere verbal criticiſm. Yet even this is often of very conſiderable importance, as the omiſſion, alteration, or change of a ſingle word or letter may ſometimes greatly affect a whole ſentence, and occaſion a moſt material difference in the ſenſe, the power, the force, or the beauty of the original [a].

[a] To illuſtrate this, let me offer only two ſhort remarks, one taken from Biſhop Lowth's Iſaiah, and the other from Archbiſhop Secker's Notes in Merrick's Annotations on the Pſalms; and I ſhall give them in as conciſe a manner as I can, referring the Reader to the Originals.

The truth of this remark will not be controverted by any who have attempted the buſineſs of criticiſm either in the Greek or Latin languages; and that great critic[a], of whom the author of the Divine Legation often ſpeaks in terms of the higheſt admiration and reſpect[b], paſſed a great part of his life, and employed all the vaſt powers of his mind and all the rich ſtores of his learning, in aſcertaining by mere verbal grammatical criticiſm the true readings of thoſe authors on whom he commented. And why the application of great talents to the improvement and elucidation of the ſacred text, ſhould be held an employment leſs meritorious, leſs dignified, and leſs important, than that of criticiſing the Heathen claſſics, muſt be left for your Lordſhip to explain.

But in this walk of literature (be it *narrow* or of wide extent) you are of opinion "that Archbi-"ſhop Secker did not attain to any great diſtinc-"tion." Is it ſo indeed, my Lord? Do you feel

Iſ. xli. 1. For החרישו *be ſilent*, LXX. read Ἐγκαινίζεσθε, and certainly found in their copy החדישו, *be renewed*; and thus the diſtich is tranſlated,

Let the diſtant nations repair to me with new force of mind,
And let the people recover their ſtrength.

At Pſ. lxxiv. 8. for καταπαύσωμεν in LXX. read καταχαύσωμεν, and ſo Syr. The correſponding word in the Hebrew, without the Points, may be read imperatively, and thus will agree in ſenſe with this propoſed emendation of the Septuagint.

[a] Dr. Bentley.

[b] See Pope's Prol. to his Sat. and Warburton's note on this line—

From ſlaſhing Bentley down to piddling Theobalds.

yourſelf

yourſelf *competent* to give publicly ſuch a deciſion as this on ſuch a ſubject? Have you yourſelf a critical knowledge of the Hebrew language; and have you carefully examined not only thoſe admirable criticiſms, which the Archbiſhop communicated to various authors, but the many valuable manuſcripts he has left behind him in the Lambeth Library, replete with the ſoundeſt Hebrew erudition? You will not, I believe, lay claim to either of theſe qualifications. And yet without both how can you be juſtified in hazarding ſuch a ſtricture on ſo great a literary character? May I not apply to your Lordſhip (with a little variation, but with much more truth) the very words you have applied to Dr. Secker, "That the courſe of "your life and ſtudies hath not qualified you to "judge of the diſtinction attained in Hebrew cri-"ticiſm by ſuch a man as Archbiſhop Secker?"

The real fact is, my Lord, and it ought to be ſtated in juſtice to the Archbiſhop, that he did attain *the very higheſt diſtinction* in that walk of literature. Having myſelf ſtudied the Hebrew language and the original Scriptures with much attention for many years, and having peruſed with great care many of thoſe critical remarks of Dr. Secker, which are before the public, as well as the greater part of thoſe manuſcript obſervations on the Hebrew text, which are in the Lambeth Library, I conceive myſelf tolerably qualified to pronounce on this queſtion. And I do affirm, without heſitation and without reſerve, that of all the Hebrew

critics

critics I ever conſulted (and I have conſulted the moſt eminent, ancient and modern) Archbiſhop Secker appears to me the moſt ſagacious, the moſt accurate, and the moſt profound. For the proof of this I appeal with confidence to all his critical remarks on the Hebrew text, both manuſcript and printed; but more particularly to his anonymous Notes inſerted in Mr. Merrick's very learned and ingenious Annotations on the Hebrew Pſalms, publiſhed in 1768, with the Diſſertations that follow. Theſe notes, though moſt of them ſhort and in a very rough unpoliſhed form, are yet alone ſufficient to eſtabliſh the character I have given of Dr. Secker's critical abilities; and they ſhew a degree of ſagacity, penetration, ingenuity of emendation, and felicity of conjecture, which your Lordſhip will not find ſurpaſſed by the commentators on any of your favourite Claſſic authors, not excepting even Bentley himſelf. The notes are before the public; and I am in no fear of being contradicted by any man of judgement and candour, who has read and underſtands them [a].

But the eminence of Archbiſhop Secker in this

[a] Mr. Merrick was not at liberty to name the author of theſe Notes; but he deſcribes him in the words of Biſhop Lowth, as Virum ſumma eruditione, ſummo loco.

I would beg leave alſo to recommend to the reader's notice the Archbiſhop's judicious and learned Diſſertation on the Viſion of Ezekiel's Temple, which may be found inſerted at length in the beginning of the 40th chap. of the Commentary on that Prophet, by Dr. Newcome, the preſent Archbiſhop of Armagh.

branch

branch of learning does not depend ſolely either on theſe Notes, or on my ſingle opinion, but on the united ſuffrage of all the beſt Hebrew ſcholars, dead or living, who had the happineſs of being acquainted with him. Dr. Lowth and Dr. Kennicott, who were confeſſedly in the foremoſt rank of Biblical critics, did, I am well aſſured, always look up to Archbiſhop Secker as *the very firſt* of that claſs. And the former more particularly acknowledges his obligations to him in the following terms. "In the Lambeth Library there are two Bibles "with the Archbiſhop's notes; one a folio Eng-"liſh Bible interleaved, containing chiefly cor-"rections of the Engliſh tranſlation; the other a "Hebrew Bible of the edition of Michaelis, Halle "1720. in 4to. The large margins of which are "filled with critical remarks on the Hebrew text, "collations of the ancient Verſions, and other "ſhort annotations, which ſtand an illuſtrious "monument of the learning, judgement, and in-"defatigable induſtry of this excellent perſon—I "add alſo of his candour and modeſty; for there "is hardly a propoſed emendation, however inge-"nious or probable, to which he has not added "the objections that occurred to him againſt it [a]."

What now does your Lordſhip ſay to ſuch a teſtimony as this from one of the moſt conſummate Hebreans of his time? Will you object to the competency of the judge, or controvert the

[a] Prelim. Diſſ. to Biſhop Lowth's Iſaiah, p. lxix.

juſtice

juſtice of his deciſion? And will you oppoſe your ſingle opinion on the ſubject of Hebrew literature (in which I preſume you do not wiſh to be thought an adept) not only to that of two ſuch eminent Orientaliſts as Lowth and Kennicott, but to the concurring ſentiments of all the beſt Hebrew critics now living; ſome of whom, though warmly attached to your Lordſhip, have expreſſed in the ſtrongeſt terms their aſtoniſhment and grief at the ſtrange and unaccountable temerity, with which you have unfortunately committed yourſelf, and riſqued your credit with the world in this inſtance?

III. Your Lordſhip's laſt obſervation on Archbiſhop Secker is, "That his chief merit lay in ex-"plaining clearly and popularly in his Sermons "the principles advanced by his friend Biſhop "Butler, in his famous book of *The Analogy*, and "in ſhewing the importance of them to religion." That he had this merit, among many other excellencies, is moſt certain. But as it is confined to a very ſmall number of his Sermons, not more I believe than three or four, out of near a hundred and forty, it cannot be juſtly conſidered as his principal merit. His chief excellence as a ſermon writer was unqueſtionably a familiar, practical, perſuaſive kind of eloquence. By much the greateſt part of his Sermons is of this deſcription. And in plain natural manly reaſoning, in fertility of matter, in a clear and profound knowledge of Scripture, in the number, the variety, the novelty, and the peculiar

felicity

felicity of his quotations from it, in accuracy of obſervation on the manners of the world, and the various artifices, the follies, and the foibles of the human heart, he is equalled by few, and exceeded by none. This ſurely is a merit as much ſuperior to that of explaining, in a few diſcourſes, the principles of Biſhop Butler, as the talent of reforming and meliorating the manners of mankind is to that of illuſtrating the ſublimeſt theories which the wit of man ever produced.

The truth is, that Dr. Secker's tranſcendent abilities as a practical preacher were univerſally acknowledged, were ſtrongly atteſted by thoſe numerous congregations, conſiſting of all ranks of people, that conſtantly attended his ſermons; and the public opinion ſince his death has amply confirmed the juſtneſs of the following eſtimate of his talents for this kind of compoſition, given by his impartial Biographer.

"The ſermons which he ſet himſelf to compoſe were truly excellent and original. His faculties were now [a] in their full vigour; and he had an audience to ſpeak before, that rendered the utmoſt exertion of them neceſſary. He did not however ſeek to gratify the higher part by amuſing them with refined ſpeculations or ingenious eſſays, unintelligible to the lower part, and unprofitable to both; but he laid before them all, with equal freedom and plainneſs, the great Chriſtian

[a] When he was made Rector of St. James's, Weſtminſter.

duties belonging to their reſpective ſtations, and reproved the follies and vices of every rank amongſt them, without diſtinction or palliation. He ſtudied human nature thoroughly in all its various forms, and knew what ſort of arguments would have moſt weight with each claſs of men. He brought the ſubject home to their boſoms, and did not ſeem to be merely ſaying uſeful things in their preſence, but addreſſing himſelf perſonally to every one of them.

" Few ever poſſeſſed, in a higher degree, the rare talent of touching on the moſt delicate ſubjects with the niceſt propriety and decorum, of ſaying the moſt familiar things without being low, the plaineſt without being feeble, the boldeſt without giving offence. He could deſcend with ſuch ſingular eaſe and felicity into the minuteſt concerns of common life, could lay open with ſo much addreſs the various workings, artifices, and evaſions of the human mind ; that his audience often thought their own particular caſes alluded to, and heard with ſurpriſe their private ſentiments and feelings, their ways of reaſoning and principles of acting, exactly ſtated and deſcribed.

" His preaching was at the ſame time highly rational, and truly evangelical. He explained with perſpicuity, he aſſerted with dignity, the peculiar characteriſtic doctrines of the Goſpel. He inculcated the utility, the neceſſity of them, not merely as ſpeculative truths, but as actual inſtruments of moral goodneſs, tending to purify the hearts, and regulate

regulate the lives of men; and thus by God's gracious appointment, as well as by the inſeparable connexion betwixt true faith and right practice, leading them to ſalvation.

"Theſe important truths he taught with the authority, the tenderneſs, the familiarity of a parent inſtructing his children. Though he neither poſſeſſed nor affected the artificial eloquence of an Orator, who wants only to amuſe or to miſlead; yet he had that of an honeſt man, who wants to convince, of a Chriſtian preacher, who wants to reform, and to ſave, thoſe that hear him. Solid argument, manly ſenſe, uſeful directions, ſhort, nervous, ſtriking ſentences, awakening queſtions, frequent and pertinent applications of Scripture; all theſe following each other in quick ſucceſſion, and coming evidently from the ſpeaker's heart; enforced by his elocution, his figure, his action, and above all by the correſponding ſanctity of his example, ſtamped conviction on the minds of his hearers, and ſent them home with impreſſions not eaſy to be effaced.

"It will readily be imagined that with theſe powers he quickly became one of the moſt admired and popular preachers of his time. And though it is not to be expected that his ſermons will now afford the ſame pleaſure, or produce the ſame effects in the cloſet, that they did from the pulpit, accompanied as they then were with all the advantages of his delivery; yet it will plainly appear, that the applauſe they met with was founded

no leſs on the matter they contained, than the manner in which they were ſpoken [a]."

This is a juſt and faithful deſcription of the peculiar character of the Archbiſhop's ſermons, and of the reputation in which he was held as a preacher, not only by the multitude, but by men of the higheſt rank and moſt diſtinguiſhed talents and learning: a reputation which he never could have acquired and preſerved ſo long, had "his chief "merit conſiſted in explaining clearly and popularly "the principles of his friend Biſhop Butler." This is very penurious praiſe indeed, and, as we have already ſeen, unfounded in fact. If the reader has any doubt of this, let him compare the ſubjects, and the matter of them, with the Analyſis which Biſhop Butler has given of his work in the introduction to it; and he will not, I apprehend, diſcover in any of them (except the three firſt of his poſthumous ſermons) any more either of the principles or the arguments of the *Analogy*, than every evangelical preacher muſt be ſuppoſed to teach and inculcate, I mean the general and fundamental princi-

[a] Life of Archbiſhop Secker, p. xix—xxii.

I have in this and a former inſtance extracted largely from the Review of the Life of Archbiſhop Secker; and as both paſſages are ſo finely drawn, and ſo very much to my purpoſe, I need make no apology for the length of them. Indeed the whole Review is ſo ably worked throughout, and exhibits ſo juſt a portrait of that great and good man, that I ſcarce know how to conſult better for the reader's entertainment and improvement, than by recommending or recalling to his careful peruſal this excellent ſpecimen of elegant and faithful Biography.

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ples of Chriſtian faith and practice. In the three diſcourſes above mentioned he has indeed introduced and treated in a moſt maſterly way, and in a manner entirely his own, the Doctrine of the *Analogy*, and given perſpicuity and clearneſs to arguments, which in the original work are ſometimes above the comprehenſion of common readers. And this will not be thought ſurpriſing, when it is known, that he was perfectly familiar with that incomparable work, as well as intimately connected with the author of it, that he reviſed it critically and carefully before it was publiſhed, and that, obſcure as ſome parts of it may ſtill remain, we now ſee it in a much more perfect and intelligible form, than it would have appeared in without that review.

But in the reſt of Archbiſhop Secker's diſcourſes, we diſcover no ſymptoms of imitation, much leſs any traces of plagiariſm, any forced or unnatural intertextures. We ſee, on the contrary, the plaineſt marks of original thought, clear and comprehenſive conception, profound inveſtigation, and juſtneſs of arrangement. He ſeems in every inſtance to have made himſelf a perfect maſter of the ſubjects he undertook to diſcuſs, to have looked into their adjuncts, connections, dependencies, conſequences, and even all the material objections to them; to have condenſed and compreſſed his thoughts with uncommon ſkill, and yet with admirable perſpicuity; to have made the grand fundamental principles

ciples of Chriſtianity, and the great rules of morality, the baſis and ground-work of the whole, and to have recommended both by the greateſt variety of well-choſen and cogent arguments, that either Reaſon or Revelation could ſuggeſt. Whenever he enters on the field of criticiſm in his ſermons, (which is but ſeldom) he explains difficult paſſages of Scripture with great force of reaſoning and clearneſs of deduction, takes in all that latitude of expoſition which has a fair appearance of truth, and, by uniting the various ſenſes in one regular chain, he gives an energy and beauty to paſſages, which before ſeemed perplexed and encumbered.

I have often thought that no better method could be recommended to the younger Clergy, when they firſt enter on their ſolemn office, than to ſtudy carefully the diſcourſes of this great maſter, to analyze and examine them minutely, to abridge ſome, to ſelect from others particular paſſages and diviſions, in order to dilate and enlarge upon them; and thus to adapt them more commodiouſly to the caſt of ſuch humble manners and plain underſtandings, as they will probably meet with at their firſt outſet in life.

Beſides the Archbiſhop's Sermons, there are other valuable monuments of his induſtry, judgement, and ability, which ought not here to be intirely paſſed over unnoticed. His Lectures on the Catechiſm are admirable in their ſtructure, ſound in their doctrine, eaſy and ſimple in their language.

guage. Moſt of them are excellent, conſidered as ſingle detached compoſitions; and the whole in an united view exhibits as fine a compendium of Chriſtianity, adapted to the capacities and convictions of all men, as this nation was perhaps ever favoured with. His Charges alſo are of very important uſe to Eccleſiaſtics of every rank and deſcription. They illuſtrate many uſeful particulars relating to church-government and diſcipline; and no one can ſtudy them without receiving from them much ſubſtantial benefit, much intereſting information.

The Reader, I truſt, if not your Lordſhip, is by this time convinced, that the eſtimate you have given of the learning and the abilities of Dr. Lowth and Dr. Secker, is in almoſt every article of it very greatly below the truth; and I ſhall offer no apology to your Lordſhip for having attempted to prove that it is ſo. I have aſſumed no liberty in the defence of my friends, but what you have yourſelf exerciſed to a much greater extent in behalf of Biſhop Warburton. My object has been not only an allowable, but, as I conceive, a very laudable one, to vindicate two reſpectable characters, which appeared to me much injured by your contemptuous remarks upon them. To this I have intirely confined myſelf. But if in any inſtance I have expreſſed myſelf with undue warmth (which I hope however is not the caſe, and was certainly not intended) your Lordſhip well knows how

how to make all reaſonable allowance for the zeal and the ardour of friendſhip. Mine however has not carried me the length of endeavouring to lower any other character, in order to raiſe thoſe that I particularly eſteem; and I ſincerely wiſh your Lordſhip had obſerved the ſame moderation. It would have ſaved you the trouble of this Letter, and much pain to ſeveral of your friends, who, I can aſſure you, are not a little diſturbed at the injuſtice you have done to two excellent men, who are now no more, who are incapable of vindicating themſelves, and whoſe only offence plainly was, what I before hinted, that of preſuming to think differently from Dr. Warburton.

There is, I believe, my Lord, very little difference of opinion in the world on this indiſcretion of yours; and were I to repeat to you what has been ſaid upon it, even by ſome of your moſt zealous admirers, you would inſtantly ſtrike thoſe offenſive paſſages out of your book. You could not indeed better conſult your fame than by ſuch a ſtep. For there can be no ſurer mark of a great mind, than that of frankly acknowledging and readily correcting an error, into which it has been inadvertently betrayed.

Think not, my Lord, that the writer of this Letter has the ſmalleſt enmity either towards your Lordſhip or Biſhop Warburton. If I know any thing of my own heart, it is incapable of entertaining any ſuch ſentiment. On the contrary, I

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have a high regard for the talents and the virtues of both. I have read a great part of the writings of both with admiration and delight: I wiſh them to be read by all who are capable of reading them, and to go down with all their merited applauſe to future ages.

But then I equally wiſh that ſuch men as Secker and Lowth may be permitted to enjoy, unenvied and unmoleſted, that ſhare of fame, which is juſtly their due, and to tranſmit it unimpaired to the lateſt poſterity.

There is room enough in the world for you all, and there is want enough of all your united abilities, to defend and ſupport that divine religion, of which you are all ſuch diſtinguiſhed ornaments. It is unworthy of men ſo confeſſedly eminent, to cheriſh idle contentions with each other for ſuperiority of talents or of learning. Such petty diſputes do them much diſcredit in the eyes of the world, and greatly leſſen that influence which they would otherwiſe have on the public mind. They ſhould therefore have the magnanimity, "to bear a brother near the throne [a]," to ſacrifice all little private piques, jealouſies, and reſentments, to the advancement of their common cauſe, and to ſuppreſs every unfriendly ſentiment towards a competitor, that

[a] Pope.

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may tend to lower the credit and the utility of writings, which are evidently calculated to promote the moſt important intereſts of mankind.

I am,

Your Lordſhip's

moſt obedient Servant.

FEBRUARY 20,
1796.

FINIS.